

## Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to LFPP staff to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> (e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)	Oct 1, 2014 - Sept 30 2016
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Taylor Clark
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	REV Birmingham, Inc.
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Urban Food Project: Farm-to-Corner-Store Initiative
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> (e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)	14-LFPPX-AL-003
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Birmingham, AL
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$100,000

LFPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

☒ Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

☐ Different individual: Name: \_\_\_\_\_; Email: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.
  - i. Goal/Objective 1: **Lease a refrigerated truck, obtain tag and insurance.**
    - a. Progress Made: **Complete. REV obtained a lease agreement with Regions Bank for a 16-ft refrigerated truck sourced through Emerald Transportation Solutions.**
    - b. Impact on Community: **Enabled the Urban Food Project to begin operating year-round, to pick up produce at farms and to begin serving more corner stores in low-income communities. In the two years of implementation of The Urban Food Project: Farm to Corner Store Initiative, REV sold more than \$36,000 in fresh produce to corner store owners in low-income communities creating healthy food access for an estimated 42,000 residents. The lease of a refrigerated truck has stabilized and solidified UFP’s distribution operation for long-term growth.**
  - ii. Goal/Objective 2: **Expand contract with a driver to implement a year-round produce distribution system.**
    - a. Progress Made: **Complete. REV has been able to expand the distribution system to operate year round 5 times per week.**
    - b. Impact on Community: **Allowed REV to hire a driver, increasing organizational capacity and delivering to more corner stores and restaurants while alleviating operational and administrative burdens formally placed on other staff. This distribution role has become valuable to the effectiveness of the program as this individual serves as the eyes and ears of the operation, interfacing with store owners and buyers.**
  - iii. Goal/Objective 3: **Increase and expand produce purchase network from baseline to 40 farmers and from baseline produce purchased from Alabama farmers to \$56,741 in 2015.**
    - a. Progress Made: **Complete. REV recruited producers by assessing proximity, capacity, and reliability. By surveying buyers, the UFP team identified producers to meet market demand and assisted our current network in scaling to meet this demand. REV aimed to recruit buyers within Birmingham City with the desire to prioritize local food. Through a partnership with Wood Fruitticher, one of the largest broadline distributors in the Southeast, the UFP established a local produce offering – increasing revenue and producer expenditures. To date the Urban Food Project produce purchase network includes 44 producers in its producer purchasing network. At the close of 2014, REV exceeded this goal, purchasing more than \$41,000 with Alabama producers. At the close of 2015, REV purchased more than \$90,000 from Alabama producers. In 2016, REV spent more than \$200,000 with its producer network a 122% increase over 2015’s producer expenditures. USDA LFPP grant funds were not utilized to purchase these products.**
    - b. Impact on Community: **REV’s purchasing power has begun to motivate farmers to plant new crops and larger volume crops to meet clearly defined market demand. Additionally, producers are now able to extend their season and expand their production to grow year round. Farmers have begun to rely on the Urban Food Project to provide a substantial portion of their annual income. Additionally, the UFP team’s understanding and facilitation of market demand is encouraging producers to scale their operations and grow their businesses.**

- iv. **Goal/Objective 4: Increase and expand the produce distribution network by increasing sales to an additional 37 place-based sales sites or buyers annually.**
  - a. **Progress Made: Complete.** LFPP grant funding increased UFP's capacity to deliver to an expanded buyer network in Birmingham City through the lease of a refrigerated truck and contracting a driver. Once this infrastructure was in place, the UFP team was better equipped to recruit and onboard new buyers. REV leveraged annual events like Birmingham Restaurant Week as a platform to recruit new buyers. Partnerships with other nonprofits through community coalitions became a platform for reaching out to churches and day care centers. Wood Fruitticher's investment in UFP led to a referral to local big-box grocers seeking local produce. REV's well-established corner store recruitment and onboarding process was utilized to identify and vet prospective stores to the Farm to Corner Store network to sustainably increase access local fruits and vegetables in targeted low-income neighborhoods. As we recruited new buyers, the UFP team followed onboarding with technical assistance, marketing and programming to sustain their purchasing. This included 'Yummy in my Tummy' a local snack adventure for pre-schoolers and 'Farm Fresh Cooking Facilitator Training' to empower community leaders with a local food focused nutrition program. Since receiving funding, REV's expanded the purchasing network to include 77 sites: 60 restaurants, 8 corner stores in food deserts, 3 family owned grocery stores, 2 wholesale distributors, 2 churches, and 2 day care centers have purchased produce, grains, farm eggs, and pork from REV's producer purchasing network.
  - b. **Impact on Community:** Residents in food deserts are now able to purchase the same fresh, quality produce in their corner store that's being prepared and served by Birmingham's most popular restaurants. Through nutritional programming and technical assistance, child care centers and nonprofit organizations are now able to source fresh produce to utilize in meals and nutrition education programs, through REV's pilot of 'Yummy in My Tummy' and 'Farm Fresh Cooking Facilitator Training'.
- v. **Goal/Objective 4: Establish Urban Food Advisory Council**
  - a. **Progress Made: Complete.** REV convened its first Urban Food Advisory Council meeting on January 13, 2015.
  - b. **Impact on Community:** Convening a diverse set of community food advocates generated greater enthusiasm for the Urban Food Project, provided fresh perspective and produced 3 new work plans related to operations, marketing and community outreach. Advisory board members contribute to the strategic planning and implementation of UFP's mission on a weekly basis through consulting.
- vi. **Goal/Objective 4: Increase local demand through nutrition education.**
  - a. **Progress Made: Complete.** The Urban Food Project team designed a facilitators' toolkit to begin training faith-based and community based organizations (Community Health Advisors) in a simple and replicable model of nutrition education. On Sept 15, the Urban Food Project team in partnership with the Alabama Cooperative Extension and AARP Alabama hosted the first Farm Fresh Cooking Train the Trainer session. More than 20 neighborhood leaders, public health advocates, nonprofit program coordinators and private chefs received hands-on training to replicate Farm Fresh Cooking in their community. Since then two organizations have begun planning the implementation of Farm Fresh Cooking.
  - b. **Impact on Community:** Birmingham's community leaders now have a structured training program to easily offer residents nutrition education that includes classroom, hands on cooking lessons and local produce bags.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 20\_\_). Include further explanation if necessary.
  - i. Number of direct jobs created: **1 (Driver aka 'Distribution Specialist')**
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: **1 (Manager of the Urban Food Project)**
  - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: **2 (Community Engagement Coordinator hired 6/2015; Operations Coordinator hired 5/2/2016)**
  - iv. Number of markets expanded: **21 (Previously served restaurants and corner stores)**
  - v. Number of new markets established: **42 (Newly served restaurants, corner stores, child care centers and wholesalers)**
  - vi. Market sales increased by **\$150,000** and increased by **300%**. **(2014 revenues to 2016 current revenues)**
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: **45**
    - a. Percent Increase: **100**
  
3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?
 

**Yes, through the Urban Food Project's expansion efforts we've been able to reach additional low income populations living in food deserts with low access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Using USDA's Food Access Research Atlas, we estimate that delivering locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables to target census tracts has reached more than 45,000 low-income residents since 2014 and is currently reaching an estimated 21,186 people (5,973 of which are children. In addition to corner stores, the Urban Food Project is reaching vulnerable populations by assisting child care centers to better meet nutrition guidelines and local health department regulations and nonprofit organizations in sourcing locally grown fresh produce to accompany their implementation of Farm Fresh Cooking. Lastly, REV is able to support emerging food related business to incorporate local food as they develop menus and business plans given the nature of our organizational mission and startup business assistance.**
  
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
  - i. Who are your community partners? **REV belongs to a network of community partners called Health Action Partnership, which facilitates ongoing collaboration among Birmingham's not profit and academic community. We partner with: The Jefferson County Department of Health, Magic City Harvest, AARP Alabama, University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), Samford University, Alabama Cooperative Extension, Urban Ministry, Woodlawn Foundation, Birmingham Originals and more. Most recently as a member of UAB's REACH coalition, a consortium of agencies, funded through the Center for Disease Control, working together to offer better food choices and fitness opportunities.**
  - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? **Through these partnerships REV has: identified target retailers for implementation of Farm to Corner Store; implemented survey tools; recruited volunteers for our Chef Corps to do cooking demonstrations in stores; created a toolkit and implemented a train-the-trainer program to teach Community Health Advisors how to teach Farm Fresh Cooking; recruited farmers and restaurants to our network. Most specifically through this the REACH collaborative, REV is contributing to a promotional campaign through grassroots events and a formal media campaign to drive traffic to two Farm to Corner Store partners – Munchies and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

**Deli. Additionally, UAB is executing an evaluation plan to measure the impact of this promotional efforts on store sales.**

- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? **The partnerships outlined above are critical to the Urban Food Project current and future efforts. These longstanding partnerships drive program expansion and increase our team's capacity by leveraging mutual interests and resources. Specifically, these partnerships will contribute to: expansion of our producer network; implementation of Farm Fresh Cooking; development of future prospective programmatic strategies such as Fruit and Veggie Prescriptions and menu planning technical assistance to child care centers based on REV's pilot program called 'Yummy in My Tummy'.**
- 5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? **YES. We've contracted several drivers since receiving funding. Additionally, we contract with an accountant to assist with bookkeeping. This is an indirect cost matched by REV Birmingham. Her contribution to the work plan is negligible.**
- 6. Have you publicized any results yet? **\* YES**
  - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? **REV E-newsletters to stakeholders (article attached to email), Birmingham Magazine's Food Issue (pics of issue attached to email as it's not posted online yet), video shared at annual Farm to City Connect event (<https://youtu.be/RINUdN1oZLY>)**
  - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? **REV newsletter subscribers, Birmingham Magazine subscribers and web followers, chefs, and producers.**
  - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? **More than 5,000 newsletter subscribers, more than 7,000 Facebook followers and 48,000 Birmingham Magazine readers, 20 chefs, 15 producers and 2 funders.**

*\*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).*

- 7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work? Yes, some of this is articulated in the video (link above) while additional feedback has been collected anecdotally.
  - i. If so, how did you collect the information? **This information was collected in conversation and through informal surveys.**
  - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?
    - Corner Stores  
**Jimmy Crane – Gilmer Drug** “You don’t know what it means to us to have you and your team help us reorganize our store to better serve our customers. Words can’t express how much we appreciate you all. There have been moments of discouragement over the years, but I believe our partnership is a blessing for our business.”
    - Producers  
**Dustin Smith – Gravel Ridge Farm** “We have grown because of our partnership with UFP. It’s incredible – we aren’t able to supply enough to meet the demand UFP has created.”  
**Father Kent McCaffrey – Gratitude Farm** “UFP expanded my opportunities. It’s not just their distribution, but their commitment to buying local and eating local. There’s a mutually beneficial partnership to everything they do, and it fits what I want to achieve with my

family.”

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: ☐
- ii. Did the project generate any income?
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? **In 2015, REV generated nearly \$120,000 in revenue and \$200,000 in 2016 through the Urban Food Project. These funds were used to pay farmers for their produce. The small portion of profit recognized by REV was used to pay salaries, to purchase equipment and food hub supplies.**

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).
  - **Cold storage and transportation is absolutely imperative to establishing a successful food hub and should be accounted for in the planning stages.**
  - **Startup operations like UFP’s food hub often require staff to wear multiple hats. As the UFP team increases sales and our operation grows, we now see the necessity for a designated marketing, sales and client relationship coordinator. In the early stages, sales are manageable, but as business increases and attention is diverted to the operation, a sales person is needed to focus on business development and client relations.**
  - **Software is absolutely imperative to growth. Without this tool, buying and selling local food is cumbersome and inefficient.**
  - **Regional collaboration and transportation efficiencies through collaborative partnerships and shared resources are necessary for sustainable long-term impact on the local food system.**
  - **Family owned pharmacies serving low-income communities can be ideal healthy food retail partners as health and community investment are at the forefront of their mission. This creates an ideal platform for business growth and health education.**
  - **Funding and programmatic capacity for on-farm technical assistance is needed to further sustain the Urban Food Project. Our team has addressed this need by partnering with other nonprofits who have funding to provide this type of TA to producers. The majority of producers still need support in business planning, scaling and wholesale readiness to meet the long-term demand for local food.**
  - **Funding for communications campaign implementation would have ensured diners could articulate the connection between their meal and the Urban Food Project. REV is currently planning for a 2017 communications campaign to support producers, buyers, customers and diners to more clearly articulate these connections.**
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: **N/A**

- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:
- **Taking the time to adequately plan nutrition programming makes the difference in tangible impact. While contemplating the implementation of our Farm Fresh Cooking Train the Trainer program, we considered pushing our deadline up as this was the last remaining milestone to achieve completion of our work plan. We decided to spend extra time ensuring every detail was considered. This included a robust toolkit and a flash drive full of supplemental materials to make Farm Fresh Cooking shovel ready for Community Health Advisors. This was an important lesson. To say feedback was positive is an understatement. Nearly 100% of participants reported feeling well equipped and prepared to implement Farm Fresh Cooking.**
  - **Paying producers within 14 days of purchase develops trust and rapport. It's important to ensure first and foremost that your producer network is taken care of. Statewide farmer networks are tightknit and word travels quickly about whether you're respectful, pay on time and honor your promises.**
  - **Projecting supply needs while generating market demand is important. It's a balance between producer recruitment and buyer engagement. Identifying mid-size producers became important as we recruited a large wholesaler and grocers. Engaging mid-size producers to create rapport earlier in the process would have better positioned our program for success.**

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.

**We anticipate we will have created and retained 3 jobs (Distribution Specialist, Operations Coordinator and Community Engagement Coordinator) as a result of USDA funding.**

**Looking at 2017, we plan to onboard 4 corner stores and 12 restaurants. Our experience with large wholesalers has proven challenging and may not be ideal for our current producer network. We aim to focus our energy on more quality and frequent engagement with our current client and producer network while better telling the story of impact and deepening connections.**

**We will develop a robust communications plan for 2017 to help producers and buyers better understand how they relate by way of the Urban Food Project. Our goals include not only more people eating healthier food as a result of this campaign, but greater enthusiasm for the farm-to-community models among restaurants, grocers and their customers.**

**Before end of year, we will implement a corner store ambassador and training program, teaching store owners and staff to effectively buy, merchandize, and maintain store displays to build capacity and allow the Urban Food Project team to serve more stores. Additionally, REV will partner with three stores to implement a store improvement plan to better merchandize, promote and diversify the product offering to better serve their community. This component is**

made possible by private foundation contributions, but will positively impact the program, building on our current success and generating more market demand for fresh, local food in low-income communities.

Through partnerships with Community Health Advisors, nonprofits and academic partners, REV will facilitate collaboration between nutrition education providers and corner stores. This could potentially include in-store 'eating healthy on a budget' lessons to implementation of Farm Fresh Cooking with inclusion of store owners.

Lastly, REV will pursue the work plan associated with the recent USDA LFPP funding opportunity for the expansion of the Farm-to-Community Local Food Hub. We will partner with the Woodlawn Foundation, another neighborhood community development nonprofit to develop the food hub space currently utilized by the Urban Food Project to better meet the needs of the community. In this space, a locally owned restaurant will share kitchen space with REV's startup entrepreneur network and community members in search of affordable kitchen space to scale recipes and offer nutrition education programming. This will be a platform and an expression of local food from the farm to the Birmingham community.

- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals? **N/A**